

News Release

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Contact: Kevin Gutknecht

Office: 651-366-4266

Cell: 651-231-4192

Kevin.Gutknecht@state.mn.us

MnDOT urges motorists to prepare for this round of winter weather

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Motorists should brace for challenging winter road conditions starting Friday, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Heavy and drifting snow and below-zero temperatures mean travel will be difficult.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm watch for the lower two-thirds of the state Friday through Sunday. Snowfall amounts could reach up to 10 inches in some areas followed by extreme drops in temperature and wind chills of 30 to 40 degrees below zero by Sunday morning. In some areas, blowing and drifting snow could reduce visibility to zero.

“Based on the weather forecasts, we anticipate difficult road conditions,” said Sue Mulvihill, MnDOT deputy commissioner and chief engineer. “The conditions will be conducive for snow to compact on roads, making it hard to clear them. We know that salt will take time to work with such extreme temperatures. We urge motorists to either delay travel plans or, if they must drive, plan ahead and drive according to the road conditions.”

MnDOT advises motorists to check 511 for road conditions and to reconsider their travel plans Friday and Saturday. The heavy snow and low temperatures will likely cause slippery road conditions. If travel is necessary, motorists should slow their speeds down on all types of roads. Motorists should drive with their headlights on and turn off their cruise control.

MnDOT crews will be out plowing the snow as conditions allow. Other snow-fighting measures, such as salt and sand, maybe less effective in sub-zero temperatures. Salt is less effective below 15 degrees and sand is best used when applied around curves to provide traction. However, the extreme temperatures will make these measures less effective.

When driving near snowplows, motorists should be patient and remember that snowplows are working to improve road conditions. Motorists should stay back at least five, and preferably 10, car lengths behind the plow.

“The heavy snow and falling temperatures will create very dangerous road conditions in parts of the state. Drivers should postpone travel during the storm if at all possible,” said Lt. Tiffani Nielson of the Minnesota State Patrol. “Be prepared by running errands, picking up medications or buying groceries before the storm hits. If travel is necessary, make sure everyone in the vehicle is dressed for the cold and bring blankets, water, food, phone chargers and an [emergency kit](#). Remember that tow trucks will be very busy, so you may need to wait several hours for roadside assistance or to be towed.”

For updated information on road conditions, visit www.511mn.org or call 511.

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